



RGBStock

**Bernette Bergenthuin**, of the Pretoria Bar and romance novelist

“So what do you do?”

The question is posed in various different shapes and sizes by old people, young people, professionals, hipsters, professional hipsters, on the Gautrain, in front of Court, at a braai, in a club, in the sea and at the gym.

The answer, however, evokes a similar reaction regardless of, by whom, when or where it is asked. I am an advocate, a baby junior that is, and a romance novelist. Yes, romance novels with beautiful heroines and rich, handsome heroes – those romance novels.

This is usually followed by a surprised silence, which may develop into an awkward silence or gasp.

The law? Romance novels? Surely one must have a brain to be part of the law fraternity? Surely a brain able to think up 44 000 sweet words woven into a story where everything works out must be made of pure pink candy floss?

How do I combine my two careers, firstly as counsel and secondly as romance novelist for the Afrikaans market without losing my marbles? I don't know. It just happens.

Do I use experience gained throughout my day-job as advocate in my stories? Of course, but, different drafting styles aside, a particulars of claim can hardly be compared to a chapter of *Pride and Prejudice*.



Are all my heroes tall, dark and handsome senior counsel with a sports car and a deeply buried need to be loved? No, but that is a good idea, however.

Luckily even the Gautrain reaches Park station at a point, court starts, people realise that if they do not leave the braai immediately, they will have to do the dishes, the sea gets cold and the gym class ends. The inquisition is over and I am left to romancing the law once more. **A**